Met Office

NEWS

# The bleakest assessment yet of climate change risk

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## Climate change risks worse than previous assessments while the world continues to warm.

A new report published today [Monday 28 February, 2022] by the IPCC paints the bleakest assessment yet for the impacts of climate change risks on society, human health, agriculture, ecosystems and wildlife.

The IPCC has today published the second instalment (Working Group II) of its Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) which aims to assess risks arising from climate change.

The IPCC's Working Group II report looks at specific threats including impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. One of the starkest conclusions is that widespread impacts of human-induced climate change are being seen very clearly across the entire world.

Professor Richard Betts MBE, of the Met Office and the University of Exeter, is one of the report's Lead Authors. He said: "This Sixth Assessment Report shows that climate change is already having widespread impacts, and further impacts are in the pipeline even if emissions are cut as rapidly as the most ambitious scenario suggests. Urgent action is needed to adapt to these changes.

"We also conclude that many future climate-related risks are more severe than previous IPCC assessments, increasing the urgency of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to limit future warming to as low as possible."

Professor Albert Klein Tank is the Director of the Met Office's Hadley Centre. He said: "Preventing debilitating impacts on society from increasing climate change is no longer a choice - that option closed several decades ago.

"Today's report says it is vital to adapt to the increasing climate change we are already seeing and what we know we will see in future.

"But of course lowering greenhouse gas emissions will help to avoid the most extreme climate change impacts."

The Met Office's Dr Chris Jones said: "The urgency is clearer than ever – climate change is affecting us now. But we know how we need to act – countries must unite to achieve their pledges."

The Met Office's Dr Freya Garry said: "WGII highlights we must prepare for compounding impacts from climate change, as different hazards occur at the same time, affecting our societies in many different ways."

### Key elements of the WG2 findings include:

- Observed climate impacts and projected risks highlight the need for urgent action to reduce vulnerability and create effective adaptation responses, while pursuing efforts

to limit climate change.

- Adaptation will be more successful if action is taken soon (within the next decade) and if this is underpinned by mitigation measures.
- Risks are assessed more robustly now with more evidence compared to AR5.
- There is more evidence of impacts attributable to anthropogenic climate change than in AR5, not just due to more studies being carried out but also due to continued climate change
- Severe risks are generally seen to occur sooner (i.e. at lower warming level) than previously thought.
- There are big regional variations in impacts and vulnerability, with Africa being particularly impacted

The Met Office and the IPCC have enjoyed a long working relationship since the early 1990s. Scientists from the Met Office Hadley Centre have been contributing to IPCC reports throughout that period.

For further insight on preparing the scientific response to increasing climate challenges please see the blog post from Professor Stephen Belcher (Met Office Chief Scientist) and Professor Jason Lowe OBE (Met Office Principal Fellow Applied & Climate Science).